Contents

Acknowledgements vii
Editors ix
Foreword x

The Poems 1

Emily Brontë Introduction to Emily Brontë 1
‘High waving heather ’neath stormy blasts
bending’ 3
‘And first an hour of mournful
musing’ 4
‘I’m happiest when most away’ 4
To the Blue Bell 5
A Farewell to Alexandria 6
‘And now the house dog stretched once
more’ 7
The Night-Wind 9
‘There let thy bleeding branch atone’ 10
‘I see around me tombstones grey’ 11
The Philosopher 12
Remembrance 14
Death 15
Stars 17
The Prisoner 19
‘No coward soul is mine’ 20

Emily Dickinson Introduction to Emily Dickinson 21
‘Success is counted sweetest’ 23
‘South Winds jostle them’ 23
‘Safe in their Alabaster Chambers’ 24
‘Over the fence’ 24
‘There’s a certain Slant of light’ 25
‘I’m Nobody! Who are you?’ 25
‘The Soul selects her own Society’ 26
‘A Bird came down the Walk’ 26
‘After great pain, a formal feeling comes’ 27
‘We grow accustomed to the Dark’ 28
‘I heard a Fly buzz - when I died’ 29
‘Because I could not stop for Death’ 30
‘Presentiment – is that long Shadow – on the Lawn’ 31
‘Finding is the first Act’ 31
‘Immortal is an ample word’ 31
‘The Show is not the Show’ 32
‘Apparently with no surprise’ 32
‘The Pedigree of Honey’ 32
‘My life closed twice before its close’ 32
‘To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee’ 33
‘Elysium is as far as to’ 33
‘That Love is all there is’ 33

Sylvia Plath
Introduction to Sylvia Plath 34
Ode for Ted 36
Black Rook in Rainy Weather 37
A Winter Ship 38
Two Views of a Cadaver Room 40
Metaphors 41
The Colossus 41
Mushrooms 42
You’re 44
Morning Song 44
Tulips 45
The Arrival of the Bee Box 48
The Applicant 49
Daddy 51
Lady Lazarus 54
Balloons 58
Edge 59
Elizabeth Jennings

Introduction by Elizabeth Jennings 60
The Climbers 62
Kings 63
Beyond Possession 64
For a Child Born Dead 65
Mirrors 66
In the Night 67
Choices 68
Fountain 69
My Grandmother 70
World I Have Not Made 71
The Diamond Cutter 72
Greek Statues 72
The Interrogator 73
Remembering Fireworks 74
Legacies and Language 75
Thinking of Descartes 77
The World We Made 79
It Is Not True! 81
Still Life 83

Carol Ann Duffy

Introduction by Carol Ann Duffy 84
Head of English 85
Standing Female Nude 86
A Healthy Meal 87
Recognition 88
The Dolphins 89
Ash Wednesday 1984 90
Words of Absolution 91
Psychopath 92
The Virgin Punishing the Infant 94
Foreign 95
Making Money 96
Letters from Deadmen 98
Small Female Skull 99
The Grammar of Light 100
Prayer 101
Eavan Boland

Introduction by Eavan Boland 102
The Woman Changes her Skin 104
Suburban Woman: a Detail 106
Lace 108
The Achill Woman 109
The Making of an Irish Goddess 111
Outside History 113
The Pomegranate 114
The Parcel 115
That the Science of Cartography is Limited 117
The Dolls' Museum in Dublin 118
Inscriptions 120
Anna Liffey 122

Notes 129
Poems by Emily Brontë 129
Poems by Emily Dickinson 144
Poems by Sylvia Plath 156
Poems by Elizabeth Jennings 172
Poems by Carol Ann Duffy 187
Poems by Eavan Boland 202

Approaches 216
Introduction 216

The Spiritual Perspective 217
The Rhetoric of Anguish 223

Individual Voices: Language, Imagery, and Form 231

The World 'Before we Looked at it' 238

Further Reading 240
Tasks 242

Index of First Lines 244